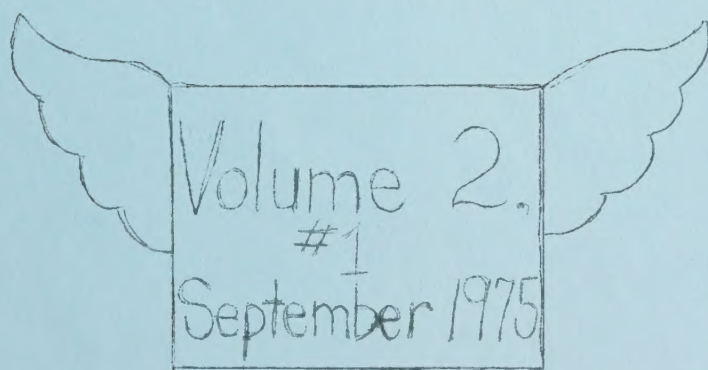
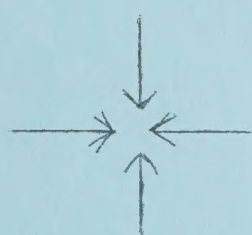


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Symbol Co-ordination Committee





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SYMBOL CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

Chairman	Barbara Kates	Psycho-Educational Consultant, Toronto
Secretary	Linda Schwindt	Occupational Therapist, Kitchener
Treasurer	Ann Kennedy	Volunteer, Toronto
Editor	Barbara Rush	Teacher, Hamilton
Asst. Editor	Lois Valentic	Parent, Hamilton
Workshop		
Convenor	Penny Parnes	Speech Pathologist, Oshawa
Consultant	Oliver Mott	Linguist, Toronto

The purpose of this newsletter is to publish articles and news items concerning the Bliss Symbol System which utilizes visual symbols as a substitute to verbal communication for physically handicapped children without speech.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for the remaining three issues or Volume 2 are still available and may be obtained by sending a cheque for \$3.00, made payable to:
Blissymbolics Communication Foundation, to

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64 Magnolia Drive,
Hamilton, Ontario.
L9C 5T2

ARTICLES for the newsletter should be sent to:

Mrs. Barbara Rush,
64 Magnolia Drive,
Hamilton, Ontario.
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CONTENTS

Notes from the Editor	2
Report on Bliss Workshop, Montreal	3
Opinion: Role of the Volunteer	4
Preschool Language Development	5
Spreading the Word, Buffalo	9
Blissymbolics Communication Foundation	9
Subscribers	11

NOTES FROM THE EDITOR

We have had such a tremendous response to the announcement of our workshop in Kitchener on October 3rd, 1975, that we have had to change the locale in order to accommodate all the applicants. Those attending should report to the Kitchener-Waterloo Crippled Children's Centre. They will be taken from there to the new locale. It would be helpful if participants arrived a little early, say 8:30 - 8:45 a.m., so that the programme may start on schedule. We have planned an extremely busy, interesting and informative workshop for you and are looking forward to renewing old friendships and making new friends.

An attractive feature of last year's workshop proved to be the display of teaching aids, equipment and interfaces provided by the Hamilton group. Because so many good ideas exist in isolation, we wish to invite all participants to bring along such material to this year's workshop and so share their ideas and talents with others. A display area will be made available for this purpose. Please ensure that your material is suitably labelled.

Unfortunately we did not stipulate that cheques in respect of workshop fees be made payable to the Symbol Co-ordination Committee. If your cheque was made out to a party other than the S.C.C., please bring along a replacement cheque - the original will be returned to you. Payment will also be accepted at the registration desk from those who did not include a fee with their application.

... ..

A major development has recently occurred with the establishment of the Blissymbolics Communication Foundation (B.C.F.) Barbara Kates has written an article for this issue describing the Foundation in detail. You will discover that the Symbol Co-ordination Committee is disbanding but that the newsletter will continue in its present form. Subscription lists have been passed on to the B.C.F. This is the last newsletter you will receive with the familiar S.C.C. cover page. The next issue in December will be published by the B.C.F.

... ..

Thanks are extended to those who submitted articles for this issue. If you have never written to us, please do take the time to jot down some news about what you are doing. Many of you have told us that the newsletter has been of great help by virtue of disseminating information and new ideas. This will continue with YOUR participation. Please write and share your successes and failures with us. Deadline date for receipt of articles for the next issue is December 1st, 1975.

Barbara Rush
Editor, S.C.C.

REPORT ON BLISS WORKSHOP, MONTREAL

A one day Bliss workshop was held on Saturday May 3rd, at Hosmer House, McGill University. This workshop was presented by Keila W. Hunsinger and Monique G. Boucher, both occupational therapists at Victor-Doré school. This workshop took place as part of a conference day organized by the Professional Corporation of Occupational Therapists of Quebec. Approximately 30 people participated in this workshop. Among the participants were teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and a parent.

Most of the morning was spent discussing theoretical aspects such as:

1. History of the Bliss system.
2. Symbol elements.
3. Teaching of symbols and syntax.
4. Evaluation criteria.
5. Adaptations.

At lunch time, participants were invited to see the film "Mr. Symbol Man".

In the afternoon, participants had the opportunity to meet and talk with some children using Bliss symbols. An informal discussion with the parents of these children followed. A practical session in which participants had to form new symbols using the "combine strategy" was also included in the day.

At the close of the meeting a short written evaluation of the workshop and the Bliss symbol system was submitted by most participants.

Some of the positive aspects of the Bliss system as seen by the participants are itemized below.

1. The Bliss system allows children to communicate with people around them, to express feelings and to develop their personality.
2. The symbols are logical and simple.
3. Decrease the frustration of the children and those around them.
4. Increase the children's autonomy, decrease their passiveness.

Some of the negative aspects:

1. The symbol boards, especially when attached to the wheelchair, are sometimes cumbersome.
2. Access to the symbols is difficult with the severely handicapped child, where electronic aids become necessary, with the interface adopted according to each individual child.
3. Adults may find themselves threatened, having to adopt a different attitude towards the child, in that the child can now confront or question him (negative?)

Generally speaking the workshop was well appreciated by the participants although people would have liked more time spent on teaching symbols. Unfortunately, time did not permit this.

Monique G. Boucher, Bsc.E.
Ecole Victor-Dore.

OPINION: ROLE OF THE VOLUNTEER

What right does the individual have to engage in "work" without receiving any form of remuneration? Volunteering as an institution is obsolete. Women have too long acquiesced to those roles that have made them subservient to any group that has believed itself part of the professional gender. Being a volunteer equips you to be a jack-of-all trades, master of none -and on the argument rages against the act of giving of one's time and energies without the so-called benefit of the pay cheque.

Of course, in all fairness, we have to acknowledge that current publications are also offering up to the reading public, informative articles on the values of the volunteer experience. Preparation for future career attainment, the ability to strengthen one's moral fibre, and the opportunity to provide useful services are some of the more common benefits that are touted. There is, however, one very major argument, in favor of the role played by a volunteer, that has long been overlooked. It is to this final argument that the rest of this brief paper will be devoted.

In very simplest terms, much of the really innovative thinking that has ever amounted to anything concrete has had its beginnings with people who were willing to give of their time, their energies and very often their own pocketbooks in return for exhaustion, frustration, and possibly a smattering of satisfaction. Very often the financial side of things came into play only after the notions of expansion, production and dissemination had infiltrated the services that had been developed. In essence, without that person "who enters or offers to enter into any service of his own free will" many of today's most viable programmes, regardless of the field of endeavor, would have ceased to exist.

How then does this discussion relate to the area of communication alternatives and more specifically to symbol communication? One has to consider the part that the volunteer has played in many of the symbol programmes known to be in existence today. Further, one has to backtrack historically to the beginnings of the very first such programme, to realize the impact of these individuals' efforts. Volunteers, and the volunteering spirit have surely been the mainstay of the various symbol programmes in operation here at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre. Without their enthusiastic support countless activities revolving around an ongoing symbol programme would have ground to a halt. From the preparation of teaching aids, to the numerous hours of individual instruction, to the disseminating of information about symbols in so many ways to so many varied places, these multi-talented, truly valuable individuals have made their mark upon symbol programming. It is no exaggeration to say that our programme owes its' growth, quality and personal stamp to the heavy investment volunteers have made of their time and skills.

Barbara Aronchick
Research Assistant,
O.C.C.C., Toronto.

PRESCHOOL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION PROGRAMMES AT O.C.C.C.

In July 1975, the Speech and Hearing Department at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre held two language development and communication programmes for non-verbal children. A group for 2 to 3 year old children met two mornings a week and a group for 3 to 4 year old children met three mornings a week. Three Speech Pathologists were involved with the programme. Parents were not involved directly; however, they did attend one morning to observe their child. Suggestions were given regarding carry over of these activities at home.

2 - 3 Year Old Group

The goals planned for this group were as follows:

1. Receptive language development which will include development of attention span, auditory and visual skills.
2. Development of the function of the oral musculature, through work on feeding.
3. Development of communication skills to facilitate the child's ability to indicate choices.

Three of these had had contact with the Speech Department for a period of time but not on a regular basis. The other 2 children were referred from a local nursery programme.

After the first session it was clear from observation that two of the children were severely delayed not only in speech development but in receptive language development as well. They were not yet relating to objects by name and a great deal of effort was necessary to motivate them to participate in an activity. One child was functioning at a picture recognition level; however, his behaviour prevented him from making any significant progress.

The programme was beneficial for this particular child in providing an opportunity for assessment (which had not been possible before) as well as in socialization.

The remaining two children who were slightly under 2 years of age and both severely involved cerebral palsy children, seemed to derive the most benefit from the goals outlined for the programme. Both were relating to objects as well as pictures.

Due to physical limitation, eye pointing rather than hand pointing was encouraged. Both showed an ability to use eye pointing for communication. Immediate positive reinforcement (either verbal or token, i.e. receiving the item indicated) was given in order to strengthen this as a means of communication.

The types of activities used were as follows:

1. At snack time, two types of food were placed in front of the child and he was instructed to look at the one he wanted first.
2. When finger painting or colouring, two colours were placed before the child and he looked at the colour he wished to start with.

3. With sand or water play, he could eye point to one of two objects he wished to play with.
4. The child was shown two pictures and he indicated by looking, which one he wished to play with. The matching item was immediately taken from a bag and given to him. The types of items used were objects that would be experienced in every day life such as: comb, car, cup, etc. This activity was selected in order to lead up to picture to object matching.

Experiences were also provided with picture recognition by name and function, matching identical objects and matching objects to pictures.

Three of the five children presented poor feeding patterns. During snack time an attempt was made to provide the physical support (including positioning and jaw support) necessary to facilitate better chewing, sucking and swallowing patterns. An effort was made to provide a variety of foods.

The Speech Pathologists involved with the programme were unanimous in their feelings that this type of programme was not appropriate for such a young age group. It was found that the children required considerable individual attention due firstly to physical disabilities, and secondly to separation anxiety. Lack of staff to aid in management prevented successful group activities. Parent participation might have solved this problem; however, it was felt that the goals set out would be more appropriate (for children at this developmental level) in an individual rather than group setting.

3 - 4 Year Old Group

The goals planned for this group were as follows:

1. Receptive Language: Improvement of attention span, auditory and visual skills in order to advance the child's conceptual growth from a concrete to a symbolic level.
2. Oral Stimulation: Development of the function of the oral musculature through work on feeding.
3. Communication: To encourage the child's ability to express himself through use of pictures and/or symbols.

Six children were chosen to participate. From previous contacts with the Speech and Hearing Department, it was felt that all of these children were ready for a non-verbal means of communication. Two children had simple picture boards before entering the programme. They were able to identify all the items on the boards but as an effective tool for communication, their use was very limited.

The first session began with the introduction of happy and sad faces to indicate yes/no. These were selected to determine the child's ability to relate to the symbols. These symbols were used in conjunction with previously established head movements. They were introduced initially because yes/no are the first basic ways a child learns he can manipulate his environment by making choices. Although, most of the children already had a means of indicating yes/no through body movements, it was felt that a happy and sad face would be the first bridge to a symbolic response.

All six children were introduced to this yes/no concept in a group with a story and were asked to make correct responses to direct questions. Large happy and sad faces were placed on the wall (yes always on the child's right and no on the left) and the children indicated their answers by pointing and looking appropriately.

In order to promote carry over to all activities, all the children were supplied with blank labels with the happy and sad faces to be attached to their hands.

During the second session, the concepts of man and lady were introduced, beginning with categorization of pictures followed by pairing the pictures with appropriate symbols. By the end of this session, two distinct groups had emerged. Two of the children grasped the symbols immediately and were consistently indicating yes/no with the symbols and correctly identifying the symbols for man and lady. These two children were ready for further introduction to symbols, while the remaining four children were not quite ready to move from the level of relating to pictures to that of symbols. At this point, the children were divided into two groups. One Speech Pathologist worked consistently with symbol introduction while the other two Speech Pathologists alternated daily with the pre-symbol group.

Pre-Symbol Group:

The aim for the pre-symbol group was to help them move from a picture level towards a symbol level. In attempting to do this, some help was obtained from Eisenson's book, Aphasia in Childhood¹, Chapter 8. Adapting Eisenson's ideas, the following order of progression was used in the group:

1. Picture identification by name first and then by function.
2. Object to object matching.
3. Object to picture matching.
4. Picture to picture matching.
5. Geometrical shape matching (circle, square and triangle).
6. Symbol to picture matching (using only pictorial symbols).
7. Symbol to symbol matching.
8. Symbol identification first by name and then by function.

The symbols introduced with this group were three pictorial ones: home, table and chair. Symbols were not simplified (i.e. putting a tail on the symbol for animal); however this should be considered for children at this level when they are ready to use symbols for communication.





Only one of the four children was successful with the final level of symbol recognition. The other three children achieved varying success with the eight levels and will need further work at a "pre-symbol" level.






1 Eisenson, Jon. Aphasia in Childhood, chapter 8, "Therapeutic Approaches II: Establishing Representational Behaviour". Harper & Rowe, 1972.

Since a great deal of effort was spent trying to establish a developmental order of progression from a symbol to a picture level, time was not spent exploring use of picture boards for communication. The only non-verbal communication used by the children in the pre-symbol group was "yes" and "no". Future groups should emphasize use of picture communication boards simultaneously with pre-symbol readiness.

Symbol Group:

Further symbol instruction continued with the categorization of various foods and drinks, progressing from the concrete, e.g. cookie and glass of water, to pictures. Throughout the basic introduction, each child was encouraged to respond with an appropriate yes/no. In the final step the pictures were paired with the appropriate symbols. Body parts were introduced in a similar progression from the concrete to the symbolic level. Initially, only the symbols for "eye", "mouth" and "legs" were presented. Until this point, the symbols were learned individually and not placed on a display. The parents of both children observed the session, in which the therapist experimented with appropriate placement of the symbols on temporary cardboard displays to facilitate good eye and hand targeting. One child was able to point easily with his hand, while the other was limited to eye pointing. One child was able to identify all the symbols on the display; however, the other child became confused when all nine symbols were displayed at one time.

He was having problems making fine distinctions between  and  ; and 
and  . The following symbols were then introduced in the same manner as before:

, , , , .

These symbols were chosen because of their pictorial nature. It was felt that this programme was an excellent way to introduce symbols. The group was small enough to provide a great deal of individual attention, yet the two children appeared to derive pleasure from the peer competition during games at the same time. A good opportunity was also provided for parental involvement from the onset of the programme.

Although all the children had been assessed on an individual basis before the programme began, it was found that considerable time had to be spent initially evaluating them in relationship to each other, and then establishing appropriate groups. Experience gained from working with these children was felt to be valuable for future programmes.

(Mrs.) Esther Barker, D.S.P.A.
Speech Pathologist

(Mrs.) Dale Sutherland, M.S.
Speech Pathologist

Spreading the word about Symbols

On May 9, 1975 we presented Blissymbolics at the annual conference of the New York State Occupational Therapy Association which was held in Buffalo, N.Y. We have been using Bliss at our center (Erie County Health Care Center for Children) under the guidance of the team at the Ontario Crippled Children's Center since September '74, and are now participating in their symbol communication research project.

Response to our program from the approximately 200 therapists who attended the conference was favorable. They were interested to find the versatility and expandability of these symbols, and seemed to enjoy the videotape of Mr. Bliss. Many people spoke to us afterwards and admired our displays--adaptive equipment we use with our children, some symbol boards, and games and stories we had adapted for use with symbols. We also shared some of our teaching techniques and activities, and responses of the children to symbols.

We expressed to our audience that our use of Blissymbolics with non-verbal handicapped children was still in the experimental stages, that we were in a research project using Bliss only in this area under the guidance of O.C.C.C., and that more information could be obtained from that center. We also stressed its use in other areas relatively unexplored such as use as an international language, use with aphasic stroke patients, and use with the hard of hearing.

We were very pleased at having been asked to present Bliss at the conference, as we could foresee this as an opportunity to "spread the word" about Blissymbolics and how it can be utilized.

Bernice P. Beamer, C.O.T.A.

Frances T. Gaston, O.T.A.

Buffalo, New York.

Announcement of

THE BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION

On July 4, 1975 the BLISSYMBOLICS COMMUNICATION FOUNDATION (B.C.F.), a non-profit corporation, was established to meet the needs and demands created by the growing interest in symbol communication. An interdisciplinary team, working at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, Toronto, pioneered the use of Blissymbolics as a communication medium for non-speaking, physically-handicapped children. The Ontario Crippled Children's Centre continues to assist the growth of symbol communication by supporting the establishment of the new Foundation.

The Blissymbolics Communication Foundation has been given a perpetual world-wide licence by Charles K. Bliss in order to allow it to achieve the following long-term objectives:-

- to promote, disseminate and encourage the use of Blissymbolics throughout the world as a vehicle of communication for verbally handicapped children and other persons who might benefit from such a communication system.

- to serve as a clearing house for standardization of symbols and their use.
- to provide training in Blissymbolics through beginning and advanced workshops.
- to provide consultant services for the implementation of symbol programmes.
- to develop, produce and disseminate materials for symbol programmes.
- to assist in the direction of research related to symbol communication.
- to facilitate and promote interchange of information regarding symbol communication.

In order to accomplish the above objectives Charles K. Bliss will continue to be an active consultant to the Foundation with regard to the creation and use of symbols. The implementation of these objectives will also be guided by the experience and recommendations of professionals working in the area of symbol communication.

Administrative officers of the new organization will be:

Executive Director	- Harry Silverman, Ph.D.
Programme Director	- Shirley McNaughton, B.A.
Associate Programme Director	- Barbara Kates, M.A.

Administrative offices will be located at 862 Eglinton Avenue East,
Toronto, Ontario. M4G 2L1.

The Symbol Co-ordination Committee (S.C.C.) developed out of a need that those working in the field of symbol communication felt for centralization, standardization, information exchange and sharing of problems and solutions. These functions have been actualized primarily through the S.C.C. Newsletter and S.C.C. Workshops. After much discussion and consideration of the resources of the B.C.F. and the formal agreement with Mr. Bliss, with mixed emotions, the Committee voted to disband and see that its objectives are carried out within the framework of the B.C.F.

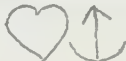
Barbara Rush and Lois Valentic have agreed to carry on with their respective roles of Editor and Assistant Editor for the Quarterly Newsletter of the B.C.F. All subscribers to the S.C.C. Newsletter will receive the Newsletter now distributed by the B.C.F.

As the structure of the B.C.F. becomes more clearly defined you will receive information as to the procedures whereby individuals can become involved in the Foundation. I hope you will continue to support the growth of Symbol Communication through your involvement in the B.C.F.

I am sure I speak for everyone when I extend great thanks to the members of the Executive of the S.C.C.:

Ann Kennedy, Treasurer
Linda Schwindt, Secretary
Penny Parnes, Workshop Convenor
Barbara Rush, Editor of Newsletter
Lois Valentic, Assistant Editor
Oliver Mott, Consultant

Their tremendous effort, energy, enthusiasm and accomplishments during the past two years are greatly appreciated.



Barbara Kates, Chairman,
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